

---

# Mapping Race and Racism in U.S. Library History Literature, 1997–2015

LATESHA VELEZ AND MELISSA VILLA-NICHOLAS

---

## ABSTRACT

This paper is a critical bibliography which examines U.S. library history literature from 1997 through 2015 to map the current research around race, ethnicity, and racism in such literature. Seventeen years ago Wayne Wiegand (2000) examined fifty years of published research literature (1947–1997) in American library history looking for varied theoretical perspectives. He argued for the use of more critical theories, and for library historians to join with social and cultural historians to help contextualize library history within broader cultural and social forces in the United States. The paper examines the progress of histories around race, racism, and people of color in libraries since Wiegand's call, and discovered that theoretical perspectives around library histories have broadened into the areas of race and ethnicity, but that there is still much research to be done. Many topics and time periods are still underresearched. For example, the paper found few or no articles that focus on race or ethnicity in the histories of U.S. private libraries, the predecessor to the public library, special libraries, or library education; it also found many articles in ethnic studies journals rather than LIS journals.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper examines U.S. library history literature from 1997 to 2015 in order to map the current research around race, ethnicity, and racism in library history literature. Seventeen years ago Wayne Wiegand (2000) reviewed fifty years of published research literature (1947–1997) in U.S. library history in search of varied theoretical perspectives. He argued for the use of more critical theories, and for library historians to join with social and cultural historians to help contextualize library history within broader

LIBRARY TRENDS, Vol. 65, No. 4, 2017 ("Spanning the Information Sciences: A Celebration Marking Seventy Years of the Doctoral Program in the School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," edited by Alistair Black and Emily J. M. Knox), pp. 540–554. © 2017 The Board of Trustees, University of Illinois

cultural and social forces in the United States. In the field of library and information science (LIS) he was not alone in this. For example, Leckie, Given, and Buschman's *Critical Theory for Library and Information Science: Exploring the Social from across the Disciplines* (2010) goes a long way toward making a case for using critical theories as research and analysis tools, with chapters by various LIS professionals looking at theorists from multiple disciplines explaining how each of their theories can aid in a critical analysis of LIS, to which much library history research and writing is attached. We chose to focus on race in this paper because, although multiculturalism and diversity are stronger focuses in the current LIS landscape, these are frequently used to avoid conversations about people of color rather than to include them. We echo Honma's (2005) assertion that the terms *multiculturalism* and *diversity* have historically been used as stand-ins for *not* discussing race and racism in LIS. We cannot address the persistent invisibility of people of color in library histories if we do not acknowledge it; as Audre Lorde (2012, p. 42) said, "that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength." In this paper we want to acknowledge the authors and histories around race, racism, and people of color in LIS while also noting the deficit.

Wiegand (2000) reaffirms Mike Harris's (1973) encouragement for U.S. library histories to promote voices that "reside outside a WASP heterosexual male-dominated literature to make their own history known to the profession" (qtd. in Wiegand, p. 7). This paper is a critical bibliographic review of histories that attempt to do just that by giving voices to underrepresented races/ethnicities within library history, and to contextualize library history within the United States' changing racial climate. To this end we systematically searched databases and journals. We limited our search from 1997 to 2015, investigating peer-reviewed, English-language journals and books. Our search terms included Boolean phrases using the words *library*, *history*, *race*, *racism*, or *critical race theory*. We truncated lib\* and rac\* to bring up as many search results as possible.

Although we included *diversity* and *multiculturalism* in our keyword searches, we eliminated texts if they did not specifically discuss race or racism as well. To reach saturation, we mined the references of those relevant texts to find additional materials on library history and race or racism. Although there were materials that dealt with multiculturalism, diversity, culture, or critical theory and the history of libraries, if they did not specifically discuss race or racism, we eliminated them as irrelevant to the scope of this particular study. We also did not include master's theses or doctoral dissertations. We focused on articles more than books. This choice may have impacted some of the categories we used to organize this paper, because there may be works that lend themselves to book-length formats (like reference literature) rather than to the length of a typical journal article.

Wiegand (2000) chose categories familiar to readers of U.S. library history (for example, bibliographies and reference literature, biography, education, associations) and added new ones, such as

“institution,” which will cover libraries of all types; “expertise,” which will cover literature addressing public and technical services in libraries; general historical studies of the profession and its activities; and “print culture history,” which represents a new interdisciplinary area of scholarship that I think has tremendous potential to help contextualize the more accurate and comprehensive role that American libraries have played in a larger world of social, intellectual, and cultural history. (pp. 6–7)

We organize this paper in categories similar to Wiegand’s original article (biographies, institutions, general historical studies, and print culture), but have removed several of the subcategories that do did not apply to its scope. Because we did not classify any of the works we will address as bibliographies, reference literature, or as expertise, we removed those categories. Significant to biography, we address the collective biographies of underrepresented groups in LIS who have been historically excluded based on race. Several articles could have been organized around multiple headings or subheadings, but we chose to classify each article under the subject heading that was most relevant. We begin where Wiegand left off in his chronicle of theoretical and critical perspectives in library history.

## BIOGRAPHIES

Biographies tend to place a hagiographical spin on their objects, and those written between 1997 and 2015 by and large follow this trend. This section is subdivided into biographies, autobiographies, and collective biographies. We found that both race and gender play a large role in U.S. library history literature.

### *Biographies*

Writings concerning race increased significantly in 1998, many of them focused on women of color, such as de la Peña McCook’s *Women of Color in Librarianship: An Oral History* (1998). The same year also saw an increase in histories of African Americans in librarianship, along with structural racism built into libraries, with works like Tucker’s *Untold Stories: Civil Rights, Libraries, and Black Librarianship*, which concentrated on civil rights and black librarianship.

Other biographies that foreground the agency of underrepresented groups include articles such as Brazile and O’Riley’s “Muriel Belton Boyd: A Legend in Librarianship among Black Librarians in Louisiana” (2005); Burt’s “Vivian Harsh, Adult Education, and the Library’s Role as Community Center” (2009); Fulton’s “An Ordinary Life in the Round: Elfreda Annmary Chatman” (2010); and Sims-Woods’s *Dorothy Porter Wesley*

at Howard University: *Building a Legacy of Black History* (2014). Each work briefly profiles the lives of their female subjects, but also their educational backgrounds and professional activities. Whitmire's 2007 article "Regina Andrews and the New York Public Library" explicitly uses a black feminist lens when describing her subject's personal life and professional career. In doing so she provides a glimpse into the achievements of an exceptional woman while not minimizing the effects of racism and sexism on her life and career.

Ardizzone's *An Illuminated Life: Belle da Costa Greene's Journey from Prejudice to Privilege* (2007) is an in-depth look at a very complicated woman and a subject not frequently explored by library historians—the practice of *passing*, which in African American culture typically means that one is passing as a white person when he or she is, in fact, black. As a black woman working freely in a white world, Bella da Costa Greene was hired in 1905 to organize the rare book and manuscript collection for J. P. Morgan. She became influential in early twentieth-century New York and traveled in circles that traditionally excluded blacks and women of her time. Unfortunately, a dearth of primary documentation (Greene destroyed most of her documents) hampers the author, but this does not negate the fascinating nature of this work.

#### *Autobiographies*

Wilkin's edited volume *African American Librarians in the Far West: Pioneers and Trailblazers* (2006) offers twenty-two portraits of librarians who overcame institutionalized racism to become, in the editor's words, trailblazers in the library profession. Each librarian profiled worked in the western United States or Hawaii. Several of the librarians included were active not only in subverting racial discrimination in the profession but also in society generally and belonged to both professional and national civil rights groups like the NAACP and California Librarians Black Caucus.

#### *Collective Biographies: African Americans*

In 2001 Owens, in "Stories Told But Yet Unfinished: Challenges Facing African American Libraries and Special Collections in Historically Black Colleges and Universities," looked at how predominantly African American libraries at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have established collections on history, literature, and art on people of African descent. She explored the historical contexts of collections within HBCUs, noting that there is an additional need for further study on how libraries both collect and preserve African American special collections. Thompson (2001) wrote on the African American experience in education, particularly within libraries as institutions of knowledge. He argues that libraries have historically served as ivory towers of knowledge, employing a case study on Arna Bontemps and drawing on his own experiences within

the library. Thompson notes that the library is not a neutral space but historically interacts with race and racism and has traditionally discriminated against black patrons: "We are left to infer that the librarian, on the other hand, fails to perform her duty either out of disregard for black patrons, out of the knowledge that one of Bontemp's hue 'didn't exist' in the books, or out of a combination of the two" (p. 82).

For those looking for a more concise offering, Hunt's "African American Leaders in the Library Profession: Little Known History" (2013) offers a small sampling of leaders in the profession and a brief history focused on African American teaching and learning; however, it provides a starting point from which to locate sources for more in-depth research about African American involvement in the library profession. When considering collective biographies, individual book chapters can prove a useful tool. One such collective biography is Wheeler's edited volume *Unfinished Business: Race, Equity, and Diversity in Library and Information Science Education* (2004), where one can find critical approaches to library history, such as Figa and Macpherson's "Brown v. Board of Education and Its Effect on Libraries and Library and Information Science Education: Mapping and Storytelling a Historical Journey Fifty Years in the Making." Another article in this category, "Doing More with Less: How a Library Expanded Its Oral History Collection" (2011) by McKether and Jeter, is more tangentially related to history in that it is less a biography and more about a library's creation of collective biographies. It is a case study of a library system that sought out counternarratives to elucidate the experiences of frequently excluded voices, highlighting the importance of using nontraditional forms of documentation; it tells of the Toledo-Lucas County Library System that, in collaboration with a production company and a university professor, used oral histories to increase the richness of its African American history collection.

## INSTITUTIONS

This section includes U.S. library institutions' histories, and is subdivided into public libraries and academic and research libraries. Although there is excellent work being done that applies critical theory to archival practice,<sup>1</sup> we did not find any historical works that matched our criteria for archives. Regardless, this section contains some of the most in-depth work that uses race/ethnicity to contextualize U.S. library history.

### *Public Libraries*

Public library historians are doing considerable work in adding racial analysis to their research. In "Autonomy and Accommodation: Houston's Colored Carnegie Library, 1907–1922," Malone (1999) explores how Houston's African American educators, leaders, and activists turned Jim

Crow segregated libraries into opportunities to create autonomous library spaces. She explores how African American residents in Houston established a black library, including an all-black board of trustees, in 1913. However, eight years later the city disbanded the board and transformed the library into a racially segregated branch of the library system.

Güereña edited the volume *Library Services to Latinos: An Anthology* (2000), which included a history of immigrant library service in the racially and ethnically diverse Queens, New York. In "Toward a Multicultural American Public Library History," Malone (2000c) continued contributing to the record of race and racial diversity by writing multiple articles that reflected on African American experiences and readership in Southern libraries. She argues for a history of African American librarians and libraries serving historically black institutions and neighborhoods. In "Books for Black Children: Public Library Collections in Louisville and Nashville, 1915–1925" (2000a), Malone examines the ways in which the Louisville and Nashville libraries collected books for black children during the early nineteenth century, finding that an analysis of the collections of books in segregated branch libraries can indicate how librarians and libraries contributed to or worked against the hegemony of the racially segregated South. In that same year (2000b), Malone published "Quiet Pioneers: Black Women Public Librarians in the Segregated South," which examined how African American libraries in Louisville, Houston, and Nashville created new opportunities for African Americans who wished to use libraries, arguing that Southern black-women librarians' histories must be made visible in the examination of the twentieth-century U.S. library.

In 2002 Graham published *A Right to Read: Segregation and Civil Rights in Alabama's Public Libraries, 1900–1965*, which argues that librarians in Alabama's public libraries historically became deeply embroiled in issues around race, and questions the roles of library and librarian in an intolerant and fearful society, noting that "one of the most heated debates among library history scholars has been over the question of whether public libraries have been designed as instruments of social control. The development of segregated public libraries in the South, which provided tacit support for a culture of white supremacy, provides perhaps the ultimate example of this phenomenon in American libraries" (p. 4). Graham also argues that "the question of whether black citizens would have the right to read in southern public libraries became a test of American democracy, one that resulted in conflict and occasionally violence" (p. 5).

Scholars like Anderson (2003), in "'The Place to Go': The 135th Street Branch Library and the Harlem Renaissance," found that the New York Public Library played a significant role in the Harlem Renaissance movement and highlighted librarian Ernestine Rose, who advocated for African American collections in the library.

Novotny (2003) writes about a compelling case in the library literature of the early twentieth century and the effort that went into the Americanization process of immigrants. In "Library Services to Immigrants: The Debate in the Library Literature, 1900–1920, and a Chicago Case Study," he finds that the Chicago Public Library was ground zero for examining how acculturation and the library during the period from 1900 to 1920 served to resist multiple language spaces and did not privilege the voices of underrepresented people.

In *Not Free, Not for All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow* (2015), Knott continues to challenge traditional notions of libraries and librarians as bastions of equality and open access. *Not Free, Not for All* builds on many of the articles she published previously under the name of Knott Malone, including the 2014 "The Publication and Reception of the Southern Negro and the Public Library," thus furthering her research on the segregation of Southern public libraries during much of the first half of the twentieth century. Most public libraries either did not admit African Americans or else admitted them only at specific times and in specific buildings. Much like Southern schools, the separate but equal doctrine gave rise to segregated libraries in which those for African Americans were decidedly underfunded, understaffed, and had limited resources. However, *Not Free, Not for All* does not tell a story of victimization, but instead of the struggles and triumphs of people who worked to build collections and services to benefit their communities and the eventual dismantling of the de jure segregated public library system in the South.

Fultz's "Black Public Libraries in the South in the Era of De Jure Segregation" (2006) provides an overview of the development of segregated public libraries in the South, which parallels the establishment of segregated schools, while Malone (2007) traces the desegregation of a public library system in the South in "Unannounced and Unexpected: The Desegregation of Houston Public Library in the Early 1950s." She also notes educational segregation, but in this instance the Houston Public Library system was ahead of the school system in desegregating its libraries beginning in 1953, before the ascendancy of the civil rights movement during the 1960s. Another, more extensive treatment of Southern public libraries is Battles's 2009 *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South: Or, Leaving Behind the Plow*.

Hand's article "Transmitting Whiteness: Librarians, Children, and Race, 1900–1930s" (2012) takes a different approach to analyzing the history of public libraries. He explores how public libraries shaped the racial views of children during the period from 1900 into the 1930s. To accomplish this, Hand uses a variety of metrics, including libraries' collections, particularly children's books, segregation in the library, and how communities influenced the collections and services of their libraries.



*Academic and Research Libraries*

In 1997 Paris wrote a study on how the academic libraries at Stanford and UCLA have responded to culturally diverse student populations. Her article, titled "Responses to Diversity: A Comparison of the Libraries at Stanford and UCLA," indicates that from the 1960s to the 1990s, movements regarding race and ethnicity on campus, and specifically in the libraries, prepared and fostered a diverse climate that respected and advocated for ethnic and racial diversity. Paris found that libraries promoted diversity well, based on bibliographic and collection-development instruction for various cultural groups; collection development in areas related to diversity; special services for foreign and minority students; training in effective cross-cultural communications and other sensitive issues; a diverse staff; the creation of the position of Diversity Librarian; and the use of films, exhibits, and the other media to foster awareness and appreciation of diversity (pp. 97–98).

Like Paris's article, Asher's "The Progressive Past: How History Can Help Us Serve Generation 1.5" (2011) places the focus on serving diverse users, in this case the children of immigrants who are neither fluent in the language of their parents nor have the level of English-language fluency needed for academic work. Asher uses the Progressive era, another period in which there were large influxes of immigrant populations, to suggest solutions for today's libraries, and highlights how public libraries have been serving these immigrant communities, which other libraries, such as academic libraries, can model.

Hurley's 2002 article titled "Oral Tradition and Tribal College Libraries: Problems and Promise at Dine College" argues for the necessity of tribal libraries to preserve oral history. He finds that static documents often lose the dynamic context of tribal oral histories.

Neal's 2005 "Leadership Dynamics in the Libraries of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities" reports the results of his study that was designed to "document the levels and patterns of turnover in library director positions in the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) for the period 1947–2004, document tenure in these leadership assignments, document where these library directors come from, and where they go when they leave" (p. 39). Neal's aim was to review the historic trends in turnover to aid in future workforce planning, and to begin addressing the relative lack of information on such historical trends in black libraries.

**LIBRARY EDUCATION**

We identified only one work that met our criteria for inclusion in this paper that focused primarily on the history of library education for under-represented races or ethnicities. Published in *Journal of Negro Education* rather than an LIS journal, Sutton's "Bridging the Gap in Early Library



Education History for African Americans: The Negro Teacher-Librarian Training Program (1936–1939)” (2005) provides an overview of a program that trained about 280 African American teacher-librarians. The program, hosted by four HBCUs, trained its students in collection development, library administration, and reference services.

### LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

There has been quite a bit more work done on the history of library associations, focusing on underrepresented groups and regarding the effects of American Library Association (ALA) policies and practices on racial issues like segregation. Yamashita, in “Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association—A History of APALA and Its Founders” (2000), explores the history of the association and its founders. Patterson (2000) discusses the history and status of Native Americans in librarianship. In “Latinos and Librarianship,” Güereña and Erazo (2000) explore the history of library services to Latinos, and specifically focus on the history of the National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA). Liu’s 2000 article in *Library Trends* reviews the history of Chinese Americans in librarianship.

In “Why Diversity in American Libraries” (2002), Josey and Abdullahi provide a historical perspective of race and the term *diversity*, laying the groundwork around the language and premises of diversity in U.S. libraries. The authors note that the fight for diversity in ALA began in 1964, when Josey called for an end to its tolerance of segregated state associations, “which denied membership to African American librarians” (p. 10).

Steven R. Harris (2003) continued the trend of investigating segregation in Southern library associations by researching the attempted integration of the Louisiana Library Association (LLA) during the 1940s and 1950s. He noted that LLA continually fought professional integration, severing its ties to ALA from 1962 to 1965: “Although individual members of the LLA at various points in the Association’s history had expressed concern for the rights of African Americans to participate, these early efforts came to naught because there was little widespread support for integration prior to 1964; professional ethics and unity were trumped by southern mores and customs” (p. 345).

Lipscomb wrote a two-part article about segregation within library associations, and the effect that segregation in the South, and then the civil rights movement, had on these associations. Legal segregation of Southern associations kept many library associations from gaining ALA affiliation; however, de facto segregation continued to be an issue for some chapters, including those associated with ALA, even after equality was mandated by law and they became officially desegregated. Part 1 of “Race and Librarianship,” published in 2004, details library associations during

the years of legal segregation; and the second part, published the following year, discusses the integration of library associations, ALA's ban on separate associations for whites and blacks, and how the civil rights movement affected the library profession. Particular attention is paid to the Medical Library Association in both parts of the article.

A focus on the black/white binary in critical studies is a likely contributor to the predominance of histories about African Americans in the literature; however, there are scholars who focus on other races and ethnicities. Villa-Nicholas is a Latinx<sup>2</sup> information scholar who reviews the advocacy and activism of REFORMA around emerging information communication technologies between the years 1987 and 2002 in "Latina/o Librarian Technological Engagements: REFORMA in the Digital Age" (2015), published in the journal *Latino Studies*.

### GENERAL HISTORICAL STUDIES OF THE PROFESSION AND ITS ACTIVITIES

This section includes works that cross the groupings used above to the extent that it would be difficult to classify them within one category.

Dawson's 2000 article "Celebrating African American Librarians and Librarianship" appeared in a special issue of *Library Trends* that focused on an overview of histories of African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islander Americans, Chinese Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans in developing library services, identifying important issues in the library, a history of leadership, and conversations around diverse identities in the library. Dawson explored a history of African American librarians and librarianship in the United States.

Wheeler, Johnson-Houston, and Walker's (2004) "A Brief History of Library Service to African Americans" is a condensed history of public, academic, and special library service to African Americans. Its brevity makes it most useful as an overview and first step in mining for topics and resources.

"Trippin' Over the Color Line: The Invisibility of Race in Library and Information Studies" is a 2005 article by Honma that examines the racism within LIS at that time by reviewing the history of libraries as an institution and how it reproduced existing hegemonic structures.

Carmichael is an expert on Southern libraries and librarianship, critiquing the profession by using queer theory. His 2005 "Southern Librarianship and the Culture of Resentment" reviews Southern library history from 1905 to 1960 by linking Southern history to early key events in the region's library development, as well as to more current trends in the cultural politics of the country. Although race, Jim Crow laws, and images of Southern gentility certainly all played a role, Carmichael provides a more nuanced view, showing that "Southerners were not always the stereotypical,

one-dimensional, patriarchal, and bigoted caricatures portrayed in literature, film, and political humor, nor, at another ridiculous extreme, were they the facile gallant gentlemen and delicate ladies of plantation lore" (p. 328).

### PRINT CULTURE

Print culture encompasses works that typically try to understand how readers use what they have read to satisfy their own needs. Those writing in this area typically use the ideas of

critical theorists like Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, Antonio Gramsci, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, and Michel de Certeau, who argue that people construct their own reality and that within that reality they evolve particular value systems evident in unique "languages" in which words take on coded deep meanings generally understood best by group members heavily invested in using them. (Wiegand, 2000, p. 20)

Wiegand called the lack of works addressing print culture scholarship's relevance to U.S. library history its "greatest shortcoming" (p. 21). He laments the fact that much library history scholarship centralizes the library or its professionals rather than centralizing the user. Print culture scholarship's focus on readers is an example of how to study the library within the context of the user rather than the other way around. There is a growing number of library historians specializing in this type of research who contextualize their histories through gender and children's reading patterns, but fewer are focusing on this topic specifically through a racial lens.

In "A More Glorious Revolution': Women's Antebellum Reading Circles and the Pursuit of Public Influence," Kelley (2003) reviewed reading circles that flourished in New England between the 1760s and the Civil War. Although not solely focused on African American women, she does delve into histories about black women training themselves in writing and editing through all-female voluntary associations—namely, literary, reading, and social circles. Through these literary societies, women, including African American women, were forming public opinions and finding a public voice:

In antebellum America in which blacks were either enslaved or subject to severe discrimination, African American women entered the debate on the most highly contested issue in their nation's civic discourse. In the literary societies they organized in cities throughout the North, they answered Elizabeth Jennings's called to "awake and slumber no more. . . . More frequently than not, African American societies played an influential role in raising political awareness. (pp. 186–187)

These print histories demonstrate the type of critical engagements by people of color with reading and writing literacies that occurred peripherally to the library.

## CONCLUSION

Although the above scholarship on the history of race in the library is useful, using Wiegand's (2000) categories highlights the fact that there is still research to be done concerning people of color. We found few or no articles for several of the categories in his article, such as private libraries—predecessors to public and special libraries. Wiegand included "Expertise" as one of his categories, "including literature that covers the history of cataloging and classification, public services (including reference), collection development, and library appliances and technology" (p. 17). We omitted this category, however, because while there are important works dealing with cataloging and so on, they either do not consider race or are not historical pieces.

There are also historical eras regarding race, racism, and libraries in the United States that are invisible. For example, we advocate for a print culture studies that analyzes the readership patterns, literacy histories, and print histories of people of color that are directly related to, and build on, library history within the country. Like Wiegand (2000), we believe that "most of what these print culture scholars say about their subject matter has direct relevance for the study of American library history" (p. 21). There is also a lack of literature outside of the black/white binary that includes other races and ethnicities, such as Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinxs.

Race is by no means the only method for critically engaging with library history research. Gender, sexuality, and class are other ways to add a critical lens to research. Nor has the use of critical theories been confined to library history; they have also been used in broader LIS scholarship. The authors also stress the frequently intersectional nature of critical theories, so it is common to find work that deals with multiple oppressions, such as gender and race, class and sexuality, or any combination thereof. Those interested in further exploration of critical theories of LIS should look to the work of scholars cited in this paper, as well as some others not included here, such as Austin (2012), Noble (2014), Olsen (2001), Pawley (2006), Roberto (2011), Roberts (2016), and Sweeney and Rhinesmith (2016). Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of LIS, scholars should also include journals outside of the field in their searches.

We have tried to be as comprehensive as possible but are aware that there may be works we have missed. Regardless, this overview is still illustrative of the fact that there is more work to be done. Wiegand (2000) was arguing, as others also were, for a broadening of library history. This would come, first, through an addressing of context. Using a metaphor from the natural world, he argued that library historians had tended to "study the history of individual trees with little attention to the ecological patterns and changes in the much larger forest." Second, he urged library histori-

ans to embrace theory, because their subject had clearly lacked “theoretical diversity” (p. 6). There has been a broadening of library history (in this case, into the area of race); and the concerns that Wiegand raises (context and critical theory) are noted in this paper. However, further work should be undertaken in order to delve deeper into contextual and theoretical issues, answering questions regarding the extent to which library histories, such as those cited here, have taken greater account of these issues.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Dunbar’s “Introducing Critical Race Theory to Archival Discourse” (2006).
2. *Latinx* is a gender-neutral term that has been gaining traction as a way to move away from binary identities to a more fluid and inclusive identification of self.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, S. A. (2003). “The place to go”: The 135th Street Branch Library and the Harlem Renaissance. *Library Quarterly*, 73(4), 383–421.
- Ardizzone, H. (2007). *An illuminated life: Belle da Costa Greene’s journey from prejudice to privilege*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Asher, C. (2011). The progressive past: How history can help us serve generation 1.5. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 51(1), 43–48.
- Austin, J. (2012). Critical issues in juvenile detention center libraries. *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults*. Retrieved from <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrly/2012/07/critical-issues-in-juvenile-detention-center-libraries/>
- Battles, D. M. (2009). *The history of public library access for African Americans in the South: Or, leaving behind the plow*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Brazile, O. R., & O’Riley, J. R. (2005). Muriel Belton Boyd: A legend in librarianship among black librarians in Louisiana. *Louisiana Libraries*, 67(Winter): 3–6.
- Burt, L. (2009). Vivian Harsh, adult education, and the library’s role as community center. *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 44(2), 234–255.
- Carmichael, J. V., Jr. (2005). Southern librarianship and the culture of resentment. *Libraries & Culture*, 40(3), 324–352.
- Dawson, A. (2000). Celebrating African American librarians and librarianship. *Library Trends*, 49(1), 49–87.
- Dunbar, A. W. (2006). Introducing critical race theory to archival discourse: Getting the conversation started. *Archival Science*, 6(1), 109–129.
- Figa, E., & Macpherson, J. (2004). *Brown v. Board of Education* and its effect on libraries and library and information science education: Mapping and storytelling a historical journey fifty years in the making. In M. B. Wheeler (Ed.), *Unfinished business: Race, equity, and diversity in library and information science education* (pp. 3–41). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fulton, C. (2010). An ordinary life in the round: Elfreda Annmary Chatman. *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 45(2), 238–259.
- Fultz, M. (2006). Black public libraries in the South in the era of de jure segregation. *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 41(3), 337–359.
- Graham, P. T. (2002). *A right to read: Segregation and civil rights in Alabama’s public libraries, 1900–1965*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Güereña, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Library services to Latinos: An anthology*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.
- Güereña, S., & Erazo, E. (2000). Latinos and librarianship. *Library Trends*, 49(1), 138–181.
- Hand, S. (2012). Transmitting whiteness: Librarians, children, and race, 1900–1930s. *Progressive Librarian*, 38–39(Spring), 34–63.
- Harris, M. H. (1973). The purpose of the American public library: A revisionist interpretation of history. *Library Journal*, 98(16), 2509–2514.
- Harris, S. R. (2003). Civil rights and the Louisiana Library Association: Stumbling toward integration. *Libraries & Culture*, 38(4), 322–350.
- Honma, T. (2005). Trippin’ over the color line: The invisibility of race in library and informa-

- tion studies. *Interactions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 1(2). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4nj0w1mp>
- Hunt, R. D. (2013). African American leaders in the library profession: Little known history. *Black History Bulletin*, 76(1), 14–19.
- Hurley, D. (2002). Oral tradition and tribal college libraries: Problems and promise at Dine College. *Alki*, 18(1), 19, 27.
- Josey, E. J., & Abdullahi, I. (2002). Why diversity in American libraries. *Library Management*, 23(1–2), 10–16.
- Kelley, M. (2003). “A more glorious revolution”: Women’s antebellum reading circles and the pursuit of public influence. *New England Quarterly*, 76(2), 163–196.
- Knott, C. (2015). *Not free, not for all: Public libraries in the age of Jim Crow*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Leckie, G. J., Given, L. M., & Buschman, J. (2010). *Critical theory for library and information science: Exploring the social from across the disciplines*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.
- Lipscomb, C. E. (2004). Race and librarianship: Part I. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 92(3), 299–301.
- Lipscomb, C. E. (2005). Race and librarianship: Part II. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 93(3), 308–310.
- Liu, M. (2000). The history and status of Chinese Americans in librarianship. *Library Trends*, 49(1), 109–137.
- Lorde, A. (2012). The transformation of silence into language and action. In *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches* (pp. 40–44). Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Malone, C. K. (1999). Autonomy and accommodation: Houston’s colored Carnegie Library, 1907–1922. *Libraries & Culture*, 34(2), 95–112.
- Malone, C. K. (2000a). Books for black children: Public library collections in Louisville and Nashville, 1915–1925. *Library Quarterly*, 70(2), 179–200.
- Malone, C. K. (2000b). Quiet pioneers: Black women public librarians in the segregated South. *Vitae Scholasticae*, 19(1), 59–76.
- Malone, C. K. (2000c). Toward a multicultural American public library history. *Libraries & Culture*, 35(1), 77–87.
- Malone, C. K. (2007). Unannounced and unexpected: The desegregation of Houston Public Library in the early 1950s. *Library Trends*, 55(3), 665–674.
- Malone, C. K. (2014). The publication and reception of the Southern Negro and the public library. In C. Cottenet (Ed.), *Race, Ethnicity and Publishing in America* (pp. 51–76). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McCook, K. D. L. P. (Ed.). (1998). *Women of color in librarianship: An oral history*. Chicago: ALA.
- McKether, W. L., & Jeter, M. (2011). Doing more with less: How a library expanded its oral history collection. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian*, 30(3), 142–153.
- Neal, J. (2005). Leadership dynamics in the libraries of the historically black colleges and universities. In H. A. Thompson (Ed.), *Currents and convergence: Navigating the rivers of change: Proceedings of the twelfth national conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, April 7–10, 2005* (pp. 39–42). Minneapolis: College and Research Libraries.
- Noble, S. U. (2014). Trayvon, race, media and the politics of spectacle. *Black Scholar*, 44(1), 12–29.
- Novotny, E. (2003). Library services to immigrants: The debate in the library literature, 1900–1920, and a Chicago case study. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 42(4), 342–352.
- Olson, H. A. (2001). The power to name: Representation in library catalogs. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 26(3), 639–668.
- Owens, I. (2001). Stories told but yet unfinished: Challenges facing African American libraries and special collections in historically black colleges and universities. *Journal of Library Administration*, 33(3–4), 165–181.
- Paris, L. H. (1997). Responses to diversity: A comparison of the libraries at Stanford and UCLA. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 23(2), 91–99.
- Patterson, L. (2000). History and status of Native Americans in librarianship. *Library Trends*, 49(1), 182–193.
- Pawley, C. (2006). Unequal legacies: Race and multiculturalism in the LIS curriculum. *Library Quarterly*, 76(2), 149–68.
- Roberto, K. R. (2011). Inflexible bodies: Metadata for transgender identities. *Journal of Information Ethics*, 20(2), 56–64.

- Roberts, S. T. (2016). Commercial content moderation: Digital laborers' dirty work. In S. U. Noble & B. M. Tynes (Eds.), *The intersectional internet: Race, sex, class, and culture online* (pp. 147–160). New York: Peter Lang.
- Sims-Woods, J. (2014). *Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University: Building a legacy of black history*. Charleston, SC: History Press.
- Sutton, A. M. (2005). Bridging the gap in early library education history for African Americans: The negro teacher-librarian training program (1936–1939). *Journal of Negro Education*, 74(2), 138–150.
- Sweeney, M. E., & Rhinesmith, C. (2016). *Information, Communication & Society*, 1–16. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1234635?journalCode=rics20>
- Thompson, J. D., Jr. (2001). African Americans and education: A study of Arna Bontemps. *Syracuse University Library Associates Courier*, 33(1998–2001), 77–99.
- Tucker, J. M. (Ed.). (1998). *Untold stories: Civil rights, libraries, and black librarianship*. Champaign, IL: Publications Office, Graduate School of Library and Information Science.
- Villa-Nicholas, M. (2015). Latina/o librarian technological engagements: REFORMA in the digital age. *Latino Studies*, 13(4), 542–560.
- Wheeler, M. B. (Ed.). (2004). *Unfinished business: Race, equity, and diversity in library and information science education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wheeler, M. B., Johnson-Houston, D., & Walker, B. E. (2004). A brief history of library service to African Americans. *American Libraries*, 35(2), 42–45.
- Whitmire, E. (2007). Regina Andrews and the New York Public Library. *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 42(4), 409–421.
- Wiegand, W. A. (2000). American library history literature, 1947–1997: Theoretical perspectives? *Libraries & Culture*, 35(1), 4–34.
- Wilkin, B. T. (2006). *African American librarians in the far West: Pioneers and trailblazers*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Yamashita, K. A. (2000). Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association—A history of APALA and its founders. *Library Trends*, 49(1), 88–109.

---

LaTeshia Velez is a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is a critical race historian in library and information studies, and her research critically examines and contextualizes information in society, and the role of information institutions in society. Her specific interests include the history of race and space in the academic library setting, social histories, and theories of information communication technologies, with a focus on race, gender, and sexuality, and a critical look at how people of color use information spaces.

Melissa Villa-Nicholas is on the faculty of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, in the Harrington School of Media and Communications. Her research interests include the history of Latinxs and information technologies and information spaces, Latinx sociotechno practices, the history of libraries, and race/class/gender technology studies.